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Greece is third NATO country to be shaken by revelations of East-bloc espionage

By Leigh Bruce

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Athens

Greek authorities announced Wednesday that a high-ranking naval officer and two electronics engineers had been arrested and charged with spying for the Soviet Union and violating state secrets.

Greece is the third NATO country in recent weeks to be shaken by revelations of Soviet-bloc espionage, following West Germany and Britain.

The arrests appear to be the result of information provided to United States counterintelligence officials and then passed on to Greek authorities by Soviet defector Sergei Bokhane, who was reportedly deputy director in Athens of the Soviet military intelligence service before fleeing to western Europe and then the US in May.

Information provided by Bokhane is allegedly behind the delay in US government approval of a license to export 40 F-16 fighter jets to Greece, because of fears of technology leaks.

The naval officer, Lieut. Comdr. Basilios Serepisios,

served in the computer center of the Greek naval general staff. According to Alternate Minister of Defense Antonis Drossoyannis, however, Commander Serepisios could not have betrayed NATO secrets, because he had nothing to do with alliance work. He could have damaged Greek defense, however, Mr. Drossoyannis said, because he was involved in such important administrative and logistical planning as mobilization, and personnel promotions and transfers.

The two electronic engineers were identified as Michael Megaloekonomou and Nicholaos Pipitsoulis. The former worked for several large US firms involved in defense work, such as ITT, Hewlett-Packard, and Standard Electric of Greece, a subsidiary of ITT. Mr. Pipitsoulis was managing director of Marak-Electronika, a Greek company that does business with the same US firms.

In searches of the two engineers' apartments a large amount of incriminating equipment was found, including

an infrared camera, special paper for invisible writing, a key chain with a hidden lens for reading microfilm, code books, and a short-wave transmitter, said Athanasios Tsouras, Alternate Minister of Public Order.

Security sources here assert that up to 25 other Greek military officers are currently under surveillance. Some sources state that US authorities have provided a list of Greeks from a number of different professions, drawn up by Bokhane, who allegedly have cooperated with the Soviet Union.

However, Defense Minister Drossoyannis said he was not aware of the existence of any such list.

When Bokhane defected to the West, the US State Department claimed that he had provided invaluable information concerning the Soviet Union's military espionage activities in Greece, its methods for procuring US high-technology items through Greece, its role in terrorist activities in the West, and other information.



Pipitsoulis is charged with selling secrets